

ANTENNA STRUCTURE LIGHTING AND Y2K

The purpose of this round table is to discuss the Year 2000 computer date problem and its impact on antenna structure lighting. A Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem identified seven areas at risk of which the telecommunications area was high on the list. A recent poll of Information Technology officers of America's largest employers reveals that 20% have begun implementation of Y2K testing and 33% have detailed plans in place. Companies like Merrill Lynch and Chase Manhattan have budgeted \$250 - 300 million this year to address the problem. American Airlines have spent \$100 million on the problem in 1997, CSX and Union Pacific railroads have each spent \$35-46 million in 1997, and FedEx has budgeted \$75 million for the problem this year. It has been reported that corporations and government agencies will spend over \$200 billion, by even conservative estimates, to fix the Y2K problem. Additionally, it has been forecast that in the U.S., one trillion dollars will be spent in litigation of the problem. Clearly, the problem demands attention and has caught the attention of some in industry.

The Chairman of the FCC has said in a statement on the Y2K problem before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology that the FCC's primary role is to push the private sector to take responsible action. The industry and individual communications companies are the only parties who can take the steps necessary to ensure Y2K compliance and their actions need to be coordinated. They need to determine the scope of the problem and if there is a "chain of interdependence" between different elements in their industry. The FCC's role is to motivate and to facilitate. It is our hope that this Antenna Structure Lighting Round Table will serve to highlight the communities' awareness of the Y2K problems, their responsibilities under the Commission's rules for keeping antenna structures properly lighted, and that it will prompt entities to take the steps necessary to assure that their ability to meet these responsibilities.

Additionally, the FCC has issued a Public Notice that is included in your information package that alerts tower owners to their responsibilities and cites applicable rules for those responsibilities. The FCC has also plans to undertake an initiative to contact the tower registrants in our database who may be affected by the Year 2000 ("Y2K") computer date change situation through a direct mailing. We have asked them to share important information on the Y2K situation and again remind them of their responsibilities under the Commission's rules for maintaining the marking and lighting assigned to their structure.

The Commission wants to stress to you the responsibilities for maintain safe towers. For the past two years, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Compliance and Information Bureau have worked closely to implement and enforce the Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) program and to eliminate potential air hazards. For example, the FCC

recently issued a Public Notice, which is in your information package, warning to all tower owners about complying with lighting rules following recent incident in Texas in which a helicopter ambulance nearly hit unlit radio antenna. Enforcement of lighting rules is "top priority," said Compliance & Information Bureau Chief Richard Lee and also said we welcomes information from public about unlit towers by calling 1-888-225-5322 (1-888-CALLFCC). Additionally, during the past two years, the Compliance and Information Bureau has conducted a vigorous educational and audit campaign to alert owners and licensees of their responsibilities under the ASR program. On December 4, the Compliance and Information Bureau released a Public Notice, also in your package, that found 28 % of towers it audited were not registered as required by FCC rules. In 1999, Compliance and Information Bureau will continue this audit to bring owners of antenna structures that have not registered their structures with the Commission, into compliance. Because this registration program is essential to air safety, the Compliance and Information Bureau is going to step up its efforts to audit for proper registration. Failure to comply may result in the issuance of monetary forfeitures to the owners.

It is our hope that the forum today provides antenna structure owners with sufficient warning about Y2K-related issues that could cause a life-threatening light system failure, and to inform you of our expectations. We also hope that you take the message back to those in the industry that were not able to attend today and inform them of the issues and our expectations.